

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 PC-01 OMB-01 CIAE-00 COME-00
EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 HEW-04 CU-02
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C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 4131

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB PINT EC
SUBJ: TEACHERS STRIKE--A POSTMORTEM

REF: (A) QUITO 3933; (B) QUITO 3835; (C) QUITO 3545;

1. WITH THE REOPENING OF MOST OF THE NATION'S PRIMARY SCHOOLS
JUNE 20, THE NATIONAL TEACHERS' STRIKE THAT BEGAN MAY 18 FINALLY
SPUTTERED OUT. FROM THE GOE VIEWPOINT, THE FINAL RESULT WAS A
COMPLETE VINDICATION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S FIRM STAND AGAINST THE
STRIKE THAT HAD BEEN MAINTAINED SINCE THE OUTSET.

2. CURRENTLY, VIRTUALLY ALL STRIKERS HAVE RETURNED TO WORK.
ALTHOUGH STRIKERS ARE NOT TO BE PAID FOR TIME LOST, THE GOE HAS
RELEASED MOST TEACHERS ARRESTED DURING THE DEMONSTRATIONS THAT
MARKED THE STRIKES FINAL STAGES. THOSE FEW REMAINING IN
CUSTODY, SAYS THE GOVERNMENT, ARE "IMPLICATED" IN THE STRIKE
LEADERSHIP AND WILL BE FORMALLY CHARGED. THERE WILL BE NO
OTHER REPRISALS.

3. COMMENT: THE LAST FEW MONTHS OF THE RODRIQUEZ LARA
GOVERNMENT (UNTIL JANUARY 1976) WERE MARKED BY SUCCESSIVE
CAPITULATIONS TO LABOR GROUPS (INCLUDING THE TEACHERDUP THAT
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HASTENED THE GOVERNMENT'S DECLINE. THE POVEDA GOVERNMENT
HAS APPEARED DETERMINED NOT TO REPEAT THAT EXPERIENCE.
PRIOR TO THE BEGINNING OF THE TEACHERS' STRIKE AND THE
NATIONAL GENERAL STRIKE ON MAY 18, THE GOE LAID OUT ITS
POLICY IN SPECIFIC TERMS, I.E., ILLEGAL STRIKE ACTIVITY IS
NOT ACCEPTABLE AND WILL BE LEGALLY PUNISHED. DESPITE PRESSURES,
THE GOE HAS NOT DEVIATED FROM THAT FIRM POLICY AND BOTH

STRIKES FAILED.

4. LABOR HAS BEEN TAKEN BY SURPRISE BY THE GOE'S INFLEXIBLE POSITION AND ITS LEADERSHIP IS DIVIDED ON HOW TO RESPOND TO THE GOE'S CURRENT POLICY. THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTIONS HAVE DECREASED THE LIKELIHOOD OF A SERIES OF PROGRESSIVE STRIKES IN SEARCH OF CONCESSIONS AND HAVE DISCOURAGED CERTAIN GROUPS THAT HAD INTENDED TO USE ILLEGAL STRIKE ACTIVITY AS A PRESSURE TACTIC AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WHO HAD SCHEDULED A NATION-WIDE STRIKE FOR JUNE 22 HAVE ANNOUNCED THE STRIKE'S INDEFINITE POSTPONEMENT. WHETHER THE GOE WILL CARRY THROUGH ON ITS ANNOUNCED PROSECUTION OF STRIKE LEADERS IS UNCERTAIN. ARREST ORDERS ISSUED AFTER MAY 18 FOR UNIONS ARE STILL VALID BUT NO MOVE IS BEING MADE TO ENFORCE THEM. THE ONLY TRADE UNIONIST HELD FOR STRIKE ACTIVITIES WAS RELEASED JUNE 21.
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